

9. BUSINESS STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS



Kennedy Street and the District's Retail Action Strategy

District residents currently spend more than \$1 billion annually outside the District – an average of about \$4,000 per household each year. This means that local businesses struggling to maintain a presence are not supported, retail employment opportunities in the District are limited, traffic congestion worsens, and retail tax dollars that would be spent on providing better services to all residents are instead lost to other jurisdictions.

Kennedy Street's prime location within the heart of the community is a good example of how existing and potential retail market strength can be improved. By bolstering its current retail mix, community residents can be better served.

The Kennedy Street Revitalization planning process took place while the City moved forward with the development of its Retail Action Strategy (RAS). The Retail Action Strategy is a citywide assessment of the District's retail potential that examines ways (1) to strengthen the city's retail base at both the citywide and local scale; (2) to promote vibrant commercial districts with a broad range of retail businesses in all neighborhoods; and (3) to create expanded opportunities

for small and local retailers. The results of this effort build upon and support the recommendations of the Kennedy Street Plan. It will also serve as a resource for merchants to use to truly understand the consumer base of the neighborhood.

Kennedy Street Merchants' Survey

The community-wide and Advisory Committee meetings served as vehicles by which to elicit the concerns, ideas, and ambitions of the Kennedy Street neighborhood as a whole. A more targeted outreach effort was aimed at the 100 or so businesses located along Kennedy Street, with the aim of identifying attitudes and areas of concern that the plan needed to address. The survey's results also provided guidance for the planning team in formulating a two-pronged business strategy that (1) aimed at assisting existing businesses while (2) created incentives for attracting new businesses.

Going door to door over a period of several days, members of the planning team were able to talk with a cross-section of approximately 17-20% of those businesses. A number of common themes emerged, regardless of the nature of the business or its tenure along the street.

When asked to identify significant challenges, respondents noted:

- Cleanliness along the corridor, and the need to improve city services generally, ranging from trash pick-up and graffiti removal to a more simplified permitting process
- Kennedy Street's physical appearance
- Safety overall
- Insufficient parking, and better enforcement of the parking regulations that exist
- Improved access to credit

At the same time, Kennedy Street was viewed as providing a set of attractive conditions for the businesses. These included:

- Affordability and availability of space
- Perceived need in the community
- Location

The latter was noted by a wide variety of businesses, ranging from a funeral parlor to a day nursery to an office supplies store to a take-out restaurant.

BUSINESS STRATEGY

As was discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 on market assessment, Kennedy Street's perceived attractiveness as a location for a variety of busi-

nesses, existing as well as new, is reinforced by the trade area's overall population and demographics. A viable business strategy, therefore, should build on its perceived – and real – assets, such as location and the strength of its residential community, while taking advantage of the presence of existing local organizations, such as the Beacon Brightwood Business Alliance, as well as local entrepreneurs who have played significant roles in the planning process.

Several of these entrepreneurs initiated discussions during the course of the process regarding the creation of a business incubator that would support new business development while providing existing – as well as new – businesses with centralized access to information regarding relevant District programs as well as this plan, and technical guidance on the plan's recommendations. Other ideas that emerged as a result of the planning process included the strengthening of job training services for Kennedy Street youth, building on the initiatives already underway through local non-profit organizations.

In general, the planning process uncovered the opportunity and expressed willingness to bring together many of the individuals – and their organizations – who have been working along parallel tracks in the area of economic development. At the same time the challenges, as noted above are

kennedy street revitalization plan

real: meeting those challenges will require not only the kinds of collaboration suggested above, but also joint efforts between the community at large and the appropriate City and other non-profit agencies.

TRENDS AND ATTITUDES

Kennedy Street Revitalization Plan MERCHANTS' SURVEY
Government of the District of Columbia
2000-2001

BUSINESS INFORMATION

Business name: _____ Address: _____
 Telephone: _____ Business: _____
 Property owner: _____ Address: _____
 Type of business (please list): _____

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR TYPE OF BUSINESS?

Home-based business	City merchant (retail)	Retail - general
Restaurant	Professional services - accountant	Retail - clothing
Local store	Professional services - architect or lawyer	Retail - sporting goods
Convenience store	Funeral home	Retail - floral
Repair service	Bathhouse	Other (specify): _____

DO YOU OWN OR RENT YOUR SPACE?
 IF THE LATTER, WHAT IS YOUR MONTHLY RENT? _____

WHAT ARE YOUR PEAK DAYS OF OPERATION? (Please check all that apply)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
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WHAT ARE YOUR PEAK HOURS OF OPERATION? (Please check all that apply)

8 am-12 pm	12 pm-4 pm	4 pm-8 pm	8 pm-11 pm	Other (please specify): _____
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HOW LONG HAS YOUR BUSINESS BEEN AT THIS ADDRESS?

DID YOUR BUSINESS MOVE FROM ANOTHER PART OF THE CITY OR ANOTHER PART OF KENNEDY STREET? IF SO, FROM WHERE? _____

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO KENNEDY STREET? (Please check all that apply)

Close to your home	Good customer mix of a similar kind	Location
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HOW MANY PEOPLE, IN ADDITION TO YOU, ARE EMPLOYED AT THIS LOCATION?

0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90	91-100	More than 100
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ON AN AVERAGE DAY, HOW MANY CUSTOMERS VISIT YOUR PLACE OF BUSINESS?

Up to 25	26-50	51-75	76-100	101-150	151-200	201-250	251-300	301-350	351-400	401-450	451-500	501-550	551-600	601-650	651-700	701-750	751-800	801-850	851-900	901-950	951-1000	More than 1000
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WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR CUSTOMERS LIVES WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF YOUR PLACE OF BUSINESS?

Less than 10%	10% to 20%	21% to 30%	31% to 40%	41% to 50%	51% to 60%	61% to 70%	71% to 80%	81% to 90%	91% to 100%
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HAS THIS PERCENTAGE ORIGINAL, STARTED THE SAME, OR DECREASED SINCE YOU'VE BEEN IN BUSINESS AT THIS LOCATION?

WITH WHICH CITY AGENCIES OR LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS HAVE YOU WORKED - OR CONTINUED TO WORK - IN CONNECTION WITH YOUR BUSINESS? (Please check all that apply)

Business Development Group	Small Business Development Center
Office of Economic Development	Office of Neighborhood Services
Office of Neighborhood Services	Office of Neighborhood Services
Office of Neighborhood Services	Office of Neighborhood Services

WHICH GROUPS HAVE YOU WORKED ON - OR ARE CONTINUING TO WORK ON - JOINTLY WITH A PARTICULAR AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION? (Please check all that apply)

Business Development Group	Small Business Development Center
Office of Economic Development	Office of Neighborhood Services
Office of Neighborhood Services	Office of Neighborhood Services
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The Merchant's Survey asked business proprietors about the major opportunities and challenges they faced as they move to strengthen their operations.

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